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CHALLENGE

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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MAY DAY 2015



SOUTH AFRICA



TURKEY



THE PHILIPPINES



BROOKLYN



ARGENTINA



UKRAINE

OUR FIGHT

✭Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

✭Only the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

✭Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

✭While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

✭Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

✭Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

✭Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

✭Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✭Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

✭Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

CONTACT US

Email
desafio.challenge@gmail.com
Mail
Box 808 GPO, Brooklyn, NY 11202
Internet
www.plp.org
challengenewspaper.wordpress.com

WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

Rulers' Plan: Turn Rebels into Soldiers

The cops are one of the capitalist state's tools of oppression, an essential instrument to terrorize workers and deter fightback against racism and inequality. But the history of class struggle shows that police atrocities also expose the bosses' vulnerability. They spark anti-racist rebellion. They bring us closer to the revolution that will smash this brutal system once and for all.

The latest example of this contradiction came when working-class youth in Baltimore rebelled against capitalist exploitation and the racist murder of Freddie Gray. In a frantic move to turn down the heat, Baltimore prosecutor Marilyn Mosby brought criminal charges against six cops involved in the modern-day lynching. (Three of them are Black.) Meanwhile, Hillary Clinton, the leading Democratic Party candidate for president in 2016, is vowing to reform "justice" in the United States, notably a prison system that locks up a higher proportion of Black men than South Africa's at the height of apartheid.

But make no mistake: these charges and promises will do nothing to end the scourge of cop terror. All politicians serve one capitalist faction or another; all rely on the police to enforce the racist segregation that divides our class. They need cops to attack strikers and protect the bosses' super-profits that depress all wages by paying Black and Latin families $612 billion less yearly in income than white families (PEW Research Center). In addition, cop terror and the school-to-prison pipeline in poor neighborhoods act to lower wages even further. These racist policies create a desperate army of unemployed youth who are forced to work for poverty pay.

When liberal politicians like Mosby and Clinton try to pacify workers' anger, they reflect the dominant finance capital wing's concern about threats to the capitalist order. As the U.S. ruling class prepares to challenge its main imperialist rivals, China and Russia, it needs to gain the allegiance of working-class youth, the people who fight the bosses' wars. Mass alienation and anti-racist anger would doom the U.S. capitalists to defeat, as they saw all too clearly in Vietnam.

The Progressive Labor Party stands firmly with the youth who rebelled against the system in Baltimore, Los Angeles, New York, and Ferguson, Missouri, and in dozens of other cities in the U.S. and around the world. We call upon workers everywhere to follow their example, under the banner of communism — the only system where racist murders, unemployment, sexism and all the evils of capitalism have no place.

Prosecution and Pacification

Mosby's decision to charge the cops who murdered Freddie Gray — in contrast to the free pass given the killers in Ferguson — is tied to the agenda of the dominant U.S. capitalist wing. The charge is being led by arch-imperialist George Soros, the liberal billionaire whose life's mission is to make sure the U.S. is ready for war against Russia or China. Soros bankrolls the Open Society Institute (OSI), which seeks to channel anti-capitalist rage into war-bent, pro-U.S. sentiment in strategic areas around the world. The OSI has funneled millions of dollars to potential anti-capitalist hot spots, from Black Lives Matter to the Arab Spring countries in the Middle East. In Ferguson alone, the organization spent $33 million after the racist murder of Mike Brown (Daily Mail, 1/15/15). In Ukraine, the OSI has fervently supported the CIA-backed leadership in its conflict with Russia. Soros is hoping to influence the trajectory of Baltimore's unrest in a similar way.

Soros has found an ally in Mosby, whose assistant prosecutor, Portia Wood, has served on OSI-Baltimore's Leadership Council since 2008. On May 3, the New York Times, the U.S. bosses' leading daily paper, published Baltimore-based activist Sonja Sohn's reaction to Mosby's move: "On Friday, one city official seemed to finally answer the desperate pleas of poor Baltimore residents." It's probably no coincidence that Sohn's Baltimore Wake Up project also cashes OSI checks.

But problems have already surfaced with Mosby's prosecution. She acted in such haste to please her capitalist masters that she may have undermined her chances of convicting the six killer kkkops, always a long shot in the rigged "justice" system. Technical questions have arisen over whether a knife allegedly found in Freddie Gray's possession was a switchblade. (Not that the knife had anything to do with his being arrested without cause or subsequently traumatized into a coma while inside a police van.) In addition, it appears that the charges filed by Mosby's office may have mistakenly identified a plumber and an elementary school cafeteria manager instead of two of the cops (Baltimore Sun, 5/4/15).

Hillary, You Liar

In an April 29 speech at Columbia University, self-styled humanitarian Hillary Clinton said, "What we've seen in Baltimore should, indeed does, tear at our soul." She proposed a thorough reform of the criminal "justice" system — an end to mass incarceration, an overhaul of mandatory minimum sentences. But Clinton, too, works for imperialist U.S. interests. The policy-shaping think tank she co-founded, the Center for American Progress (CAP), is bankrolled by Soros, Citigroup, and the Rockefeller Foundation. Its board includes Madeleine Albright, Bill Clinton's secretary of state, who once said the deaths of 500,000 Iraqi children from U.S. sanctions throughout the 1990s were "worth it."

Clinton's anti-jailing stance stems from a March 23 CAP report, "Expanding Opportunities in America's Urban Areas," which notes that up to 100 million U.S. workers — as many as one in three — have a criminal record. Like her capitalist patrons, Clinton is worried that these millions will have no stake in fighting for a system that robs them of freedom and job prospects.

In her Columbia speech, Clinton spoke of "alternative punishment" to jail. Clinton wants to unpack prisons to fill the barracks. She failed to mention, however, that it was her husband, Bill Clinton, who instituted the policies that threw millions of Black and Latin men and women into the prison system in the first place. Or that it was Bill Clinton who shredded welfare, sending millions of families deeper into poverty. Hillary Clinton's new talking points are a deceitful ploy to gain support for her presidential bid and to channel working-class youth into the military. She is singing the same tune as the Soros-funded Huffington Post. In a 2014 column, "Uncle Sam (Should) Want You: National Service vs. Mass Incarceration," an Ohio State University professor, Steven Conn, wrote:

> *For roughly 30 years between 1940 and 1973 American men were drafted into the Military….[T]hat period of service helped many with their transition into adulthood, exactly at that moment when some young men wind up in the criminal justice system today. I am not suggesting a return to compulsory military service. Instead, I am suggesting that a more widely conceived program of national service might have a significant impact on crime and on the men most likely to commit it by providing them with the kind of work, structure and sense of purpose that is missing for too many of them.*

From Rebellion to Communist Revolution

Workers in Baltimore and worldwide should beware of reformers' attempts to "fix" the exploitation of capitalism. As long as society is run by and for profit, racism, sexism, unemployment, and imperialist slaughter can only get worse. The one way to rid the world of these plagues is to organize under the leadership of the Progressive Labor Party. PLP fights to lead the working class to smash the system in its entirety. We will create the only society that values every life — a communist society.✪

May Day: Celebration and Militancy

BROOKLYN



Hundreds of members and friends of the Progressive Labor Party marched on Flatbush Avenue this past Saturday, hailing from New York, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Boston, and New Jersey. The May Day march was led by high school and college students, and the multiracial composition of the marchers was received enthusiastically in the predominantly Black and Latin working-class Brooklyn neighborhood. More than 6,000 CHALLENGEs were sold and over $5,000 was raised from the community, and at various points members of the community joined our march, raised their fists and give us their contact info. Shutting down traffic in one direction, a sound truck with a DJ playing beats at the lead kept the chants loud and the atmosphere militant! Drivers saluted us honking their horns.

This May Day celebrates 50 years of the Progressive Labor Party. Speakers throughout the march pointed out that as we celebrate the history of the international working class. PLP's international history is proud and just getting warmed up. PLP has been involved in or led militant struggles in at least two dozen countries, in North America, Europe, the Caribbean, Latin America, Asia and Africa.

As our march proceeded past intersections where unarmed Black youth were murdered by the police, a comrade on the sound truck addressed the marchers and the community that the only answer to these racist police murders is to join PLP and help us continue to build an international, fighting revolutionary Party. The spirit and militancy of the march showed that PLP is ramping up its forces for the tasks of the next 50 years, becoming a mass working-class Party and organizing communist revolution!

A highlight was a report from two PLP students from Baltimore who spoke of their struggles there since Freddie Gray's murder, and a background to the racist conditions in that city. The keynote speech at the conclusion of the march connected the current conditions of the international working class and the need to fight for communism with her own life and struggles as an immigrant worker. She then invited all who believe in fighting racism and capitalism to join PLP's fight, that a communist world is possible, and that we can win.

Following the keynote address, two friends of PLP from Germany spoke and commented that this was their first U.S. May Day, and how inspired they were to participate in the march. They explained that in Germany, where May Day is an official holiday and is treated as more of a parade, PLP's May Day brought out militancy and struggle! The crowd was then treated to a poem written by one of the Baltimore students, before dispersing into a nearby park for box lunches.

On PLP's 50th anniversary, our fighting international Party, and our fight to build a mass multiracial communist movement, is growing. This May Day in New York City, in the belly of the U.S. imperialist beast, was both a celebration and a call to be a part of the next 50 years of world history. Fight for your class sisters and brothers and join us!✪

SAN FRANCISCO



PLP members and friends participated in two separate May Day coalition marches on both sides of the Bay.

We were impressed and inspired that the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) workers voted for a stop-work meeting to honor May Day as the International Workers' Day with the spotlight on labor against police terror. The ILWU has a long history of work actions that support anti-racism and for international solidarity with fighting workers: anti-apartheid, the racist murder of Oscar Grant, attacks on workers in Palestine, and attacks on immigrant workers. The ILWU on the West Coast came out of the Communist Party organizing industrial unions in the 1920's and 1930's. At the time of the Bolshevik Revolution, they refused to load ships with supplies going to U.S. soldiers in Siberia who were fighting the newly-found Soviet Union. It still reflects some ideas from this earlier communist movement. The May Day shut-down of the ports was a small taste of workers' power.

In San Francisco, the May Day march focused mainly on issues facing immigrant workers, but also on the whole range of how capitalism devastates the working class around the world: by paying workers low wages, state terror against immigrant workers, and marginalizing indigenous workers from San Francisco to Mexico, forcing Black, Latin, and immigrant workers into the prison system.

In both marches, PLP joined with and led chants in English and Spanish. Our banner and red flags, and communist literature tied individual issues to their root in capitalism's racism and exploitation of the working class.

We'll shut it down every day ,

….We're doing this for Freddie Gray

…..We're doing this for Amilcar Lopez

….We're doing this for Alejando Nieto.

….We're doing this for Ramarley Graham.

Las luchas obreras no tienen fronteras.

Immigrant workers are under attack, what do we do? Stand up , Fight back.

Primero de Mayo, Communista y Proletario.

Fight for Communism power to the workers.✪

Fighting Against Racist Police in Worcester

WORCESTER, MA, May 6 — The Progressive Labor Party held a forum on police terror here. Speakers showed how racist police terror is a key tool of capitalism and that fighting it using the bosses' rules cannot change it. Only getting rid of capitalism can destroy racist cops.

One speaker exposed how even filing complaints is useless. He cited the testimony of a police detective who said that not one of the complaints in Worcester over a long period of time were even investigated. They were just rubber stamped as "unsubstantiated."

Another speaker offered hope for a world where the choices aren't between useful complaints and running. He pointed out that racism and bias are caused by the capitalist profit system which uses them to divide the working class and is continuously being reinforced in police departments. PLP fights to expose the lies of the bosses and to organize people to reject the worsening conditions, and to fight for communism. When workers take power, the material basis for racism and exploitation will be gone.

At the forum, PLP sold CHALLENGE and called on everyone to join the May Day marches on May 2 in Brooklyn. Several people committed to going, and money was raised for a defense fund for anti-racist protesters arrested by the police.

Later, one person asked PLP and Massachusetts Human Rights Commission to help him organize a Black Lives Matter rally on April 29. Both organizations agreed and endorsed the rally, which was mainly organized by Worcester State University and Clark University students. Many local residents joined the march and rally.

We will continue to support these struggles, and to raise the need for communist revolution.✪

MAY DAY 2015

ISRAEL-PALESTINE



We PL'ers in Israel-Palestine participated in three May Day marches in our region, two in Tel-Aviv-Jaffa and one in Nazareth.

On April 30, a march was organized in north-central Tel-Aviv by the pro-boss Histadrut union federation as well as its youth movement, HaNoar Hoved (Working Youth) and its adult counterpart, Dror Israel (Freedom Israel). While this march was organized by liberals, a more progressive group attended it: the Coalition for Direct Employment. This group, of which one local PL'er is a member and another is a supporter, fights against the horrors of contract work and for regular employment and unionization.

Approximately thirty contract workers, including PL'ers and our friends, attended this march, carrying signs calling for full-time employment and against the contract bosses. Slogans compared the contract bosses to organized crime bosses (which they are) and called for an end of this ultra-exploitative phenomenon. Many of the marchers were social workers, a profession which is increasingly outsourced by the government, as well as housekeeping workers, a job which is almost entirely outsourced to contract bosses.

On May 1, May Day itself, hundreds of workers, including local PL'ers marched in central Tel-Aviv in the main May Day demonstration. This march was organized by fake leftists (the Israeli "Communist" Party and Socialist Struggle) as well as liberals (the Meretz party), but militancy was high and flags ran red. The march was headed by a sign reading "Workers of the World - Unite!" Some of our friends, Palestinian and Jewish, attended. Under the red flags, workers demanded an end to exploitative capitalism and to contract work. However, the phony reds mostly shouted slogans about "nationalization," which, under capitalist rule only means the industries moving from ownership by one boss to collective ownership by the entire capitalist class through its state. We countered this by calling for revolution and the elimination of capitalists to be replaced by workers' power.

On May 2, a May Day march was organized in Nazareth by the fake Israeli "Communist" Party. This party has a strong base there and was able to fill the streets with red flags and celebrating youth, but did not really call for communism or a revolution. PLP came and raised the red flag in this city as well.

In all cases we raised the red flag high and put communism forward, in most cases together with our friends. We hope that next year we will present an even stronger red block on May Day.✪

COLOMBIA



Comrades, friends, and workers of the world, we send militant greetings from Bogota, Colombia.

Today we are celebrating one more year of struggle on the International Day of the Working Class. We celebrate with our sights set on the unity of the workers of the world under the red flag of communism and its communist party, PLP. This has been one more year under the rule of the parasitic capitalist class, its racist wage system, its endless wars, its sexism that divides us and weakens us, and its fascism and violence against our class. In short, it's been a year of working-class struggles, protests, work stoppages, strikes and mobilizations that keeps us committed to the communist ideals of a better world.

In Colombia, workers live in misery and need. There is a teachers' strike, unemployment, low wages, poverty, prostitution, crises and chaos in the health care system, malnutrition, drug addiction, high cost of living, a cynical bourgeoisie and a prostrated left that advocates working for peace. But we tell workers, through our newspaper CHALLENGE, that revolution is not negotiable; that we will not negotiate to escape from slavery and will not negotiate to escape from capitalism. We tell workers that the capitalist state is our sworn enemy, an enemy of the working class and of our youth. We tell them that we reject the passivity and the electoral distractions, and that the state cannot be reformed but must be destroyed by a communist revolution. That's why we need revolutionary organized violence under the leadership of our Party.

Capitalism has thoroughly shown that it can no longer rule the destiny of humanity, because its laws and contradictions make its destruction inevitable. That's why we are organizing workers politically in more than 27 countries, consolidating our revolutionary line to overthrow it with the power of the international working class. PLP and its newspaper CHALLENGE call on the unity of communist to fight for this noble goal. Join us!✪

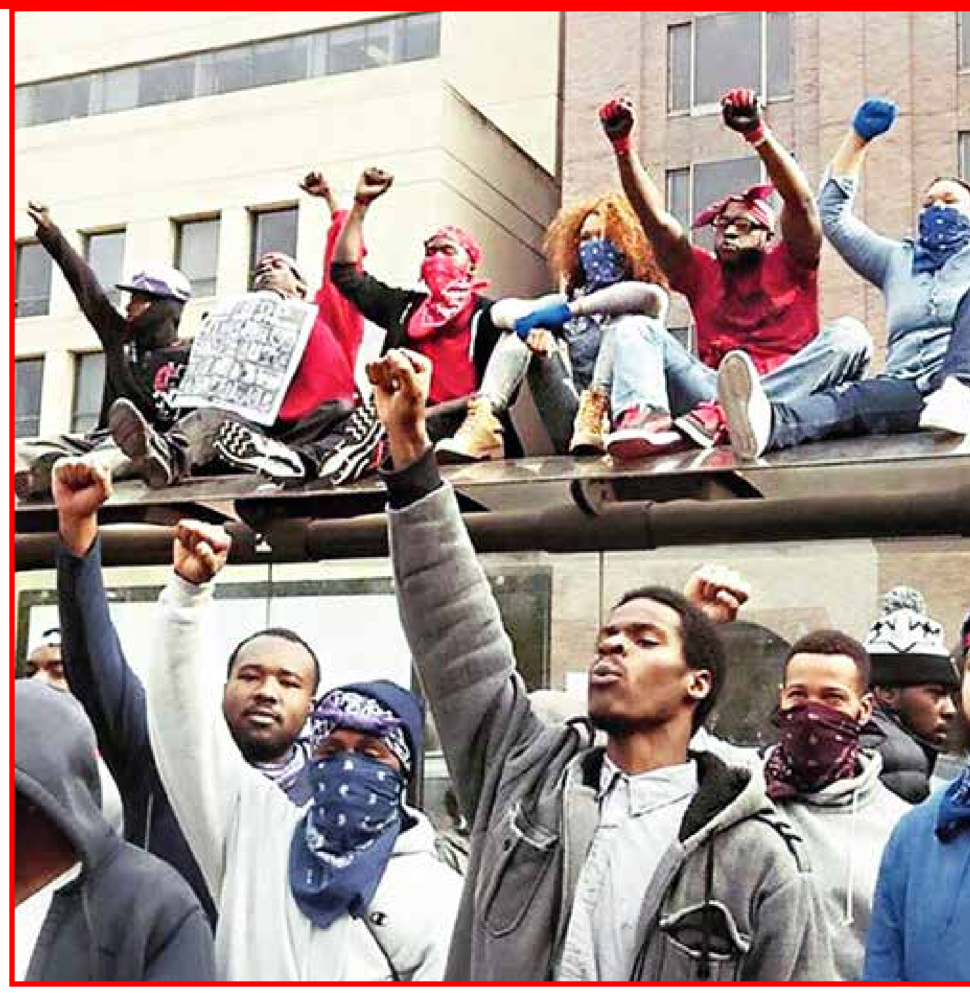
TAIWAN



PAKISTAN



Rebellion in Baltimore



BALTIMORE, May 1 — Much of the working class loves and respects boldness in the fight against racism! Members and friends of Progressive Labor Party protested throughout Baltimore today in what was the beginning of a rebellion against racist murderers.

On the night of April 24, a modest-sized group marched through downtown and South Baltimore. They blocked traffic in support of the struggle to win justice for Freddie Gray, and for all victims of police brutality. Many motorists — both Black and white — were highly supportive, honking their horns in agreement, throwing clenched fists in the air, and sharing warm smiles. However, one driver with a confederate flag on his antenna drove threateningly, acting as if he would actually run us over. People courageously stood in front of his vehicle, stopped him, and one person, without hesitation, ripped off his confederate flag.

Burn That Racist Flag

The next day, the first huge rally was held. PL'ers sold hundreds of CHALLENGE and our leaflet was received with enthusiasm. Outside the Western District police station, a member of Progressive Labor Party spoke, held up that confederate flag, and explained where it came from. There was boisterous cheering and applause. Two people came up with cigarette lighters, and the flag was set ablaze! A photo, showing the burning of that racist flag inspired thousands. On social media it was shared and liked, tweeted and re-tweeted, again and again and again. People of all ethnic backgrounds — former students of the PL'er holding up the burning flag — sent message after message of admiration and encouragement.

Working-Class Anger Is Justified

We saw many, many clear demonstrations of workers' anger. When Black police commissioner Anthony Batts came out to pacify the crowd outside the precinct, angry workers quickly surrounded him and refused to allow him to speak. He was hustled back inside by a group of cops. Workers challenged the police across the barricades, showing they had no illusions that any of the cops were their friends, white or Black. The 2.5-mile march from the precinct all the way down to City Hall was multiracial and multigenerational. Babies in strollers, youth, and elders marched. The slogan of the campaign "All Night, All Day, We will Fight for Freddie Gray!" was evident.

The rebellion shortly after the first huge march and rally. A large number of people marched from the City Hall rally to the baseball stadium. Massive lines of cops were deployed in an effort to control us. As it turned out, several cop cars were parked and empty, right next to us. The police lines were very close, barely half a block away. Nevertheless, young men — deeply angered by years of police racism, arrogance and brutality, and ready to take action after the outrageous killing of Freddie Gray — courageously smashed the windows of those parked cop cars. They also stood on top of the cars, at great personal risk, and fearlessly did as much as possible — in clear view of the cops and international media — to disable those vehicles. During all that time, the cops were unable to do anything.

A while later, due to the late hour, members of Freddie Gray's family said they needed to head back to the Gilmore Homes neighborhood, where Freddie had lived and been murdered. A group of about 60 people, began the three-mile walk. On the way, the tire on another parked cop car was slashed, an effort was made to break out a cop car's window, and cops — nervous, jumpy, and highly aggressive — showed up and grabbed one young man. Participants in our walking group made a strong effort to pull him away from the police, but weren't quite able to do so. As we continued toward Gilmore Homes, the windows on several major businesses — just like the cop car windows — were smashed.

Several blocks later, however, we reached the outer edges of downtown, and began walking up Pennsylvania Avenue, a Black residential area. A couple of people among us spoke loudly and confidently, saying "We're not downtown anymore. Don't touch anything." Starting at that moment, and for the entire rest of our long walk, not a single person bothered anything. Two police hats with badges on them, which had been taken earlier, from the cop cars near the stadium, were passed around. Members of our large group were jubilant with having turned the tables, at least a little, against the racist police who took the life of much-loved Freddie Gray.



The experience of walking back to Gilmore Homes was profoundly inspiring. The working class showed deep hatred for oppression and racism; a readiness to fight powerfully and courageously against those forces; and a thoughtful, disciplined approach to differentiating between the property and symbols of the enemy, as opposed to the lives and belongings of our sisters and brothers, which are to be respected.

Role of Cops: Terrorize Workers

The ruling class — millionaire business owners — has a problem. On the one hand, to protect their system and keep making huge profits, they have to control us. That's the purpose of police brutality today, much like the very first U.S. police department, whose purpose was to catch runaway slaves, brutalize them to set an example, instill fear in others, and then return them to slavery.

However, today's ruling class, in addition to utilizing brutality, also needs to fool us into being loyal to this system. The major capitalists — like Rockefellers' Exxon-Mobil — need to minimize our desire to rebel, and they also need us to fight and die for them, in their wars to accumulate cheap labor, resources, and markets all around the world. Fearing even greater rebellion if the cops weren't at least slapped on the wrist, Baltimore City State's Attorney, Marilyn Mosby, announced that the six cops who took Freddie's life will face a variety of charges. This includes second-degree murder, manslaughter, assault, misconduct in office, and false imprisonment.

On the other hand, the rest of the Baltimore police — who previously brutalized and killed unarmed Anthony Anderson, Tyrone West and many others — have faced no charges at all, and remain on the force to this day. Since 2011, Baltimore City paid out over $5.7 million to more than 100 people who won court cases against the police for assault, false arrest and false imprisonment. Beyond the killings by Baltimore police, dozens of residents have suffered broken bones — jaws, noses, arms, legs, ankles — along with head trauma and organ failure.

Let's be clear: the reason six cops have now been charged is not a commitment to justice. No, it's the fear by the ruling class that there would be more and bigger rebellions and huge business losses if the cops who took Freddie Gray's life were not at least charged. While those cops may not actually be indicted or tried and found guilty and serve any time, but something had to be done for the moment. After nothing was done in the high-profile cases of Mike Brown and Eric Garner, working-class anger is ready to boil over.

Guard Cheers Anti-Racists

Once the charges were announced, many people in Baltimore hit the streets to celebrate. That Mondawmin Mall was the site of some of the rebellion had taken place during the afternoon and night of April 27. There were many armed personnel carriers. Large numbers of National Guard soldiers stood shoulder to shoulder, each with an assault rifle. Amid the oncoming traffic, was an extensive, informal convoy of a different type. Many cars, one after another, had their horns honking, headlights flashing, and clenched fists jubilantly held out of windows and sun roofs, accompanied by shouts of joy. Left to right, a number of the Guardswomen and Guardsmen were giving the clenched-fist salute, in powerful solidarity with the motorcade participants.

During that day and the following week, over 3,000 communist flyers — announcing May Day, explaining the need for working-class revolution, and countering Obama, who called the rebels "thugs" — were distributed by Progressive Labor Party. Those flyers were eagerly taken by Baltimoreans — of all racial backgrounds — who, in addition to boldly standing up against police brutality, are now more interested than ever in re-considering their opinions about capitalist society, and how to win a new world without racism.

One day, large sections of the military, along with the rest of the working class, will indeed rise up to defeat capitalism and create a new, communist world of sisterhood and brotherhood. This week, many of us saw glimmers of that bright and inevitable future!✪

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Communism, Not Black Capitalism

At the invitation of a young Black resident friendly to PLP, members and friends of PLP from Chicago and Indiana traveled to Ferguson on April 18. We were a multi-racial group of women and men — white, Latin, and Black workers. We arrived at a Community Center for Ferguson youth, formerly a school. The Ferguson workers were a multi-racial group, including white workers. Workers are still angry over the outrageous institutional racism that led to the death of Mike Brown at the hands of racist cop Darren Wilson. At the Center, Party members got into a discussion with a Black entrepreneur advocating the worn-out idea of "Black capitalism" as the key to Black workers' freedom. This guy exposed himself to be an agent of the ruling class.

We were invited by our Ferguson host to attend a demonstration in nearby Jennings at the police station. Jennings Police Department was the former employer of killer cop Wilson. It has a reputation for racist terror. Several hours before we arrived, another young Black worker named Thaddeus had been killed by police in Jennings under dubious circumstances. The demonstration was for Thaddeus.

Our protest was multi-racial with many white workers from the local St. Louis metro area participating, including church members. There were Black and white motorists honking their horns in solidarity. We got out 95 CHALLENGES, plus Party leaflets publicizing our communist politics. We got on the bullhorn and called for communist revolution and armed struggle to abolish racist capitalism and its hired thugs, the cops. The Jennings cops, led by a Black sergeant, were so upset by the sight of multi-racial workers and communists openly calling for revolution, that they came out of their station five times to harass us. The last time they emerged was as the PL members were getting ready to leave. A Black woman protestor told us, "look! There's a lot of pigs all coming out the station doors! They are up to something!"

The Party stayed to support our fellow workers. If the cops' plan was to intimidate us, it failed! No protestor backed down and left! Our friends stayed in front of police station all night. PLP will be making more trips to Missouri this summer!

★ ★ ★ ★

May Day Celebration

PLP members in a Midwestern city had a May Day dinner for members of the Unitarian Church celebrating the workers' international holiday on April 25. Our gathering was multiracial. We had good food and lots of discussions before our program began. We had three main speakers, including PL comrade recently in Ferguson who gave a report on PLP organizing there.

The second report was on "Communist Organizing in the Age of President Obama," and the final report was on the all-out fight for a communist revolution to establish an anti-racist, egalitarian and classless society. We opened up the floor for open discussion of the reports. Some agreed with us, others didn't. Special mention was made that capitalism not only is destroying the international working class from Ferguson to the Middle East, but also destroying the environment with climate change.

Either we get rid of capitalism, or capitalism will ultimately get rid of us all. CHALLENGES and leaflets were distributed. We concluded with the singing of the Internationale. We will keep fighting to win the international working class to see the necessity of communist revolution as the way forward out of the hell of capitalist imperialism!

★ ★ ★ ★

Workers Gear Up for Strike, Union Leaders for Sellout

"We are facing real challenges. There is a world economy." That's how UAW President Dennis Williams tried to temper workers' anger and expectations as he addressed the two-day Special Bargaining Convention (SBC) here in Detroit, Michigan. More than 2,000 delegates took part in the gathering before negotiations start on the Ford, GM and Chrysler contracts

At the UAW convention last June, delegates voted for a dues increase that would go entirely into the strike fund. International leaders warned that the 2015 talks were going to be a war, and with 60 percent of our membership now in Right-to-Work states, we could expect a big campaign by the Right-to-Work movement to get workers to quit the union when these contracts expire. But this was not a War Council.

Detroit Mayor Duggan laid out his plan to clear the area around Detroit City Airport for a 12-year tax-free zone to build 10 new factories. This is after tens of thousands of Black families have been evicted or foreclosed on for owing back taxes!

UAW Financial Secretary/Treasurer Gary Casteel said, "The sun is shining as we enter the 2015 contract talks," referring to the billions in profits made by the auto bosses since the Obama-UAW-Wall St. bailout in 2009. That bailout cut starting wages in half, eliminated pensions for new hires, and created a second tier of health care. The bailout also exempted GM from billions in damages from the companies past defective cars.

Each International VP reported on how great things are going. The Ford report took center stage. The Chicago Ford Assembly plant now has over 2,300 workers, an increase of 60 percent since the 2009 economic collapse. Two-thirds of these workers are at entry level wages, making under $15/hr. with a cap of $19/hr. First-tier workers make about $28/hr. Work is coming back to U.S. Ford factories due to high productivity and cheap wages throughout the U.S. .

Unlike GM and Chrysler, Ford did not declare bankruptcy in 2009, and will likely be the target company in the 2015 negotiations. Ford has gone from 36,000 workers in 2011 to 54,000 today, surpassing GM. Seventeen thousand Ford workers are second tier. Huge profits allowed Ford to invest over $8 billion in plant improvements since 2011, to create even higher productivity from a growing low-wage workforce. And this doesn't include the parts-supplier plants, also on two-tier, a 70 percent of assembly plant wages.

Many of the delegates are angry and the loudest cheers came at any mention of a strike. Senior workers haven't had a wage increase in almost 10 years, and young workers are tired of making half-pay. One young worker said, "90% of the workers in my plant are second-tier. Our plant just got a new contract, and new hires get no pensions. We are exposed to dangerous chemicals [which she rattled off] and health and safety violations. We all need equal pay and healthcare."

The spirit of Ferguson was also in Cobo Hall. One delegate said, "My local and our Sister locals marched against the failures of Grand Juries to indict the killers of Mike Brown in Ferguson and Eric Garner in NYC. The fight against racism on and off the job must be at the heart of who we are." Delegates cheered. Earlier that morning, the local news released video tape of a racist beating of Floyd Dent, a Black Ford worker with 37-years seniority, by the Inkster police (a Ferguson-style suburb of Detroit).

We work in the unions to fight for the political leadership of the workers, to break them away from the dead-end treadmill of reformism and the Democratic Party. We have been at it for a long time in the UAW, and even though progress is slow, the workers continue to encourage us.

★ ★ ★ ★



MAY DAY IN FRANCE

Sign reads, "The Time of the Cherries." It refers to a revolutionary song about the Paris Commune (1871). The time of cherries is a metaphor for what life will be like under a communist society.



MAY DAY IN ECUADOR

Sign reads, "The emancipation of the workers must be conquered by the workers themselves, otherwise there will be no emancipation."

PL History: Building the Party with Industrial Workers

Continued from page 8

shoremen voted it down, but the misleaders used other trades in the union and retired workers to get it passed, ending a four-month struggle. Containerization was ushered in, and thousands of jobs were lost in the years that followed.

PL'ers learned that workers are less likely to fall for red-baiting or be intimidated by mobsters when they are consciously engaged in class struggle. We also witnessed the importance of multi-racial unity. With Black and white longshoremen working together on the job and in the strike, the bosses were unable to use racism to split and weaken them.

Finally, our experience with the ILA helped PL understand the absolute necessity of being embedded in the working class, rather than working from the outside. While our literature played a big role in the strike, our lack of members on the docks hindered our ability to recruit longshoremen and build our organization. The bedrock principle remains: To win workers to revolution, communists must build a base in the working class.

PLP Leads Washington, DC's Transit Workers

For 40 years, PLP has been a leading force among thousands of transit workers in the Metro system in Washington, DC. In the 1970s, local government took over the private bus companies as the workforce changed from mostly white to mostly African-American. In 1978, the new public transit authority attacked workers by attempting to deny them a cost-of-living increase in a period of high inflation. PLP members and friends led a six-day wildcat strike that defeated the attack. The bosses' attempt to fire the strike leaders failed.

In the early 1990s, Metro attacked again, threatening to privatize the bus fleet unless workers accepted wage and benefit concessions. The Party and militant workers led hundreds in fights against cuts in bus service and jobs. Meanwhile, the union misleadership agreed to a cap on wage-step increases, lower starting salaries for new workers, and a slower wage progression. During these battles, a PLP'er was elected to the union's executive board.



PLP's history of organizing industrial workers grows internationally, including among jute workers in India.

In 1998, the union leadership agreed to further givebacks in wage progression, along with limited health insurance benefits for new workers and defunding of the pension system. The PL'er was the only executive board member to oppose this sellout. In 2004, he won the local presidency. The overwhelmingly Black membership refused to succumb to anti-communist attacks and to a nationalist appeal by the incumbent Black president. They followed their class interests in uniting behind the white PLP member.

In the 2004 contract, the wage progression was reduced, and Metro was required to contribute to the pension fund. A new wave of anti-communism was aimed at the Party member, who returned to driving a bus. By that time, however, hundreds of workers had been influenced by PLP and CHALLENGE. A number of them joined the Party. The fight against privatization and anti-worker discipline has been waged by a new generation of Party members at Metro.

Currently, the Party is leading an anti-racist fight against background checks that would bar employment for workers convicted by the bosses' criminal injustice system. A disproportionate number of these workers are Black; the background checks would cut off one of their few avenues to higher-paying jobs.

The struggle to fight the bosses and to build the Party continues.✪

(To be continued)

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

The masses collectively turn the desert green

BBC, 4/20 — A generation ago Ethiopia's Tigray province was stricken by a famine….[which] the BBC's Michael Buerk….described as "the closest thing to hell on earth." Today…local people are using ancient techniques to turn part of the desert green….

…The Tigrayan people were depicted as just [able] to get through the day without dying.

But here, outside the village of Abr'ha Weatsbaha….from all directions, streams of people are trickling into that human river….summoned before dawn…calling every able-bodied man and woman over 18…for…20 days of…community labor. Their job, quite simply, is to tame the desert….

…Some 3,000 people have turned up. Using picks, shovels, iron bars and their bare hands, they will turn these treacherous slopes into neat staircases of rock-walled terraces that will trap the annual rains, forcing the water to percolate into the soil rather than running off in devastating, ground-ripping flash floods.

Sisters are doing it themselves…brothers, too; from strapping, sweat-shiny youths to Ephraim, a legless old man who clearly ignored the bit about being able-bodied and sits on stumps, rolling rocks downhill to the terrace builders.

Overseeing this extraordinary effort is 58-year-old Aba Hawi,…community leader….He darts from one side of the valley to the other,…slapping backs and showing youngsters the proper way to split half-ton boulders….

…His tireless leadership has brought a miraculous transformation to this sun-blasted land. In just a decade, entire mountains have been terraced. Once you had to dig 50ft down to find water. Now it's just 10ft, and 94 acres of former desert have been transformed into fertile fields. Families are now reaping three harvests a year from fields of corn, chillis, onions and potatoes….

We…hike to a vast pool of cool green water held back by a huge hand-built dam. "We've built 85 of these check-dams…" says Aba Hawi, "and you can see how they work. These mini-reservoirs fill up during the rains and are fed by groundwater in times of drought. Now every farmer has a well….Now look: we've got malachite kingfishers living in the desert."

Deputy sheriff kills black man, then takes off for the Bahamas

NYT, 4/22 — A volunteer sheriff's deputy plans to vacation in the Bahamas while facing a second-degree manslaughter charge in Tulsa….The deputy pleaded not guilty….Bates, a former insurance executive, has said he confused his handgun for a stun gun when he shot Eric Harris after [he]…ran from a sting investigation….

…The Harris family criticized the trip, saying… "At a time when we are still mourning the death of a loved one that he shot down in the street. Mr. Bates will be relaxing and enjoying his wealth and privilege."

U.S. 'justice' system: killing machine for the innocents

NYT, 4/13 — …Far too often, people end up on death row after being convicted of horrific crimes they did not commit. The lucky ones are exonerated while they are still alive — a macabre club that has grown to…152 members since 1973.

The rest remain locked up for life in closet-size cells. Some die there of natural causes; in at lest two documented cases, inmates who wee almost certainly innocent were put to death….

…At least 4 percent of all death-row inmates in the U.S. have been wrongfully convicted….for many reasons, including bad lawyering, mistaken identification and false confessions made under duress. But…prosecutorial misconduct is at the heart of an alarming number of these cases.

In the past year alone, nine people who had been sentenced to death were released — and in all but one case, prosecutors' wrongdoing played a key role….

Anthony Ray Hinton…on April 3 walked out of the Alabama prison where he had spent almost 30 years, half his life, on death row. Mr. Hinton was convicted of two murders, largely on faulty evidence that the bullets had come from his gun. His prosecutor at the time said he knew Mr. Hinton was guilty and "evil" just by looking at him. And later prosecutors continued to insist on his guilt even when expert testimony clearly refuted the case against him….

…A. M. Shroud, a former prosecutor in Louisiana's Caldo Parich….convinced a jury to convict a man named Glenn Ford and sentence him to death for murder. But Shroud now admits…he failed to identify and turn over evidence that would have cleared Mr. Ford….

Shroud…apologized to Mr. Ford — who spent 30 years in prison….[but] this is little consolation to Mr. Ford who was released in 2014 but is now dying from lung cancer that developed, and went untreated while he wasted away in prison…A judge denied Mr. Ford compensation beyond [a] $20 debit card….

…The parish's current first assistant district attorney…[said] "I'm a believer that the death penalty serves society's interest in revenge….I think we need to kill more people."

And FBI 'junk science' kills even more…

NYT, 4/27 — The odds were 10-million-to-one, the prosecutor said, against hair strands found at a…1978 murder of a Washington, D.C. taxi driver belong[ing] to anyone but Santae Tribble. Based largely on…the testimony of an analyst with the FBI, Mr. Tribble, 17 at the time, was convicted of the crime and sentenced to 20 years to life.

But the hair did not belong to Mr. Tribble. Some of it wasn't even human….DNA testing showed there was no match between the hair samples, and…one strand had come from a dog….

The Washington Post reported [that] out of 268 criminal cases nationwide between 1985 and 1999, the bureau's "elite" forensic hair sample analysts testified wrongly in favor of the prosecution in 257, or 96 percent of the time. Thirty-two defendants in those cases were sentenced to death; 14 have since been executed or died in prison….

…Thousands of additional cases [with]…potentially flawed testimony came from one of the 500 to 1,000 state or local analysts trained by the FBI….

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

PL History: Building the Party with Industrial Workers

In our May 6 issue, we published an article celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Progressive Labor Party. In addition to describing the origins of PLP — including its forerunner, the Progressive Labor Movement (PLM) — we noted four main principles for organizing a communist movement: a concentration among industrial workers; the fight against racism and sexism; internationalism, with one international party leading the international working class; and the necessity of armed struggle, since the bosses will never cede state power peacefully.

Beginning with this issue, we will revisit specific struggles that helped PLP grow to our current presence in 27 countries on five continents. We begin with our concentration among industrial workers.



MAY DAY IN BANGLADESH

The Hazard Miners Solidarity Campaign

In the winter of 1962-63, Black and white miners in Kentucky, Tennessee and West Virginia went on a bitter wildcat strike, rebelling against inhuman working conditions and starvation wages. (Average weekly pay was $25.) The mine owners, police and local officials launched a campaign of terror and scabbing to break the strike. Organizing out of their base in Hazard, Kentucky, five hundred rank-and-file miners armed themselves to prepare for class war. They dynamited bridges and blew up scab mines.

Led by one of our railroad comrades, a local union official, PLM formed the Trade Union Solidarity Committee (TUSC) to Back the Hazard Miners. TUSC organized in unions and working-class communities across the country, and workers responded enthusiastically. Truckloads of food, clothing and holiday gifts for miners' children were shipped to Hazard, along with PL magazines that brought communist ideas to the strikers. A mass meeting in New York drew nearly a thousand workers and students in zero-degree weather to hear the miners' rank-and-file leader, Berman Gibson.

The bosses went crazy. In a front-page banner outline, the Hazard Herald, screamed: "Communism Comes to the Mountains!" The liberals around President John Kennedy understood the hazard in Hazard: a multiracial group of armed miners uniting with communists to fight the bosses. They responded with a well-funded redbaiting campaign, and sent their anti-communist liberals to take over the Solidarity Committee.

Initially, the miners resisted the anti-communist attack. But as it mounted, Gibson and others retreated and turned to the liberals. After many months, the strike petered out. PLM learned vital lessons from this campaign:

• Workers will arm themselves to defend their class interests when it's clear to them that armed struggle is necessary;

• Striking workers will respond enthusiastically to bold leadership;

• While the bosses won't hesitate to use violence to break a strike or rebellion, their most powerful weapon is anti-communism;

• Red-baiting can be defeated only through protracted class struggle where communists give active leadership.

The 1964-65 Longshore Strike

On October 1, 1964, 60,000 members of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) struck all ports from Maine to Texas to fight the shipowners' demand to cut half their jobs. The strike's impact on U.S. trade impelled President Lyndon Johnson to use a Taft-Hartley injunction to force the strikers temporarily back to work. The government demanded a settlement "within the national interest." The resulting contract undermined workers' job security. Anthony Scotto, head of the Brooklyn local (and a "made" member of the Mafia's Gambino family), called it the "best contract ever."

All eight New York City daily papers lauded the contract. Only CHALLENGE, PLM's newspaper, exposed the sellout and called on workers to reject it. The paper was distributed up and down the docks. Many workers asked for extra copies to distribute, despite their union's anti-communist leadership.

A worker told CHALLENGE that the federal government had been ready to indict the ILA's gangster-ridden leadership for racketeering, but offered to quash the indictments if the leadership persuaded the rank and file to ratify the sellout contract. When CHALLENGE exposed this deal on its front page, Scotto denounced the paper's "red lies" at a meeting of over 2,000 longshoremen in Brooklyn. He read the entire flyer out loud. But the workers, hearing the contract detail for the first time, were so enraged that they voted overwhelmingly to reject the contract and go back on strike.

'Reds Under Their Beds?'

The bosses' press reported that "communist influence was swaying" the dockers to oppose the contract. ILA president Teddy Gleason blamed "communists" for the rank-and-file rebellion. Scotto pointed to "outside agitators." The World-Telegram's front page declared: "Red Hand Seen on the Waterfront." Victor Reisel, a notorious anti-labor columnist, ranted that "Chinese revolutionaries" were "spreading unrest on the docks" and warned that Mao Tse-Tung was "taking over our great urban centers."

CHALLENGE ran its own headline: "Dockers Resist Sellout, Bosses See Red!"

Johnson's assistant secretary of labor ordered the FBI to "investigate communist influence on the New York and Baltimore docks." A new contract added a few crumbs for workers. A majority of the working long-

Continued on page 7

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